



South China Sea Institute, Xiamen University Center for Oceans Law and the China Seas

# SOUTH CHINA SEA BULLETIN

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## Contents

### The absurdity of US “freedom of navigation” operations

Page 1

#### EVENTS

The 3rd Sino-Japanese Non-governmental East China Sea Airspace Security Dialogue Joint Meeting was held on May 12-13, 2017 in Nangjing, China.

Page 2

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

International Law of the Sea Summer Campus of South China Sea Institute, Xiamen University will be held on July 11-15, 2017 in Xiamen, China.

Page 2

#### SELECTED NEWS

Jiaolong Kicked Off Its First Dive In The South China Sea In 2017

Page 3

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page 7

## The absurdity of US “freedom of navigation” operations

By Zhen Lin, Assistant Professor of SCSI, Xiamen University

The US warship USS Dewey entered into the 12M territorial sea of Mischief Reef on May 25th to carry out the so-called “freedom of navigation” operations. It stayed in Chinese territorial sea for 1.5 hours and carried out rescue training. The Chinese navy finally warned it to leave.

The U.S. insisted that the operation aims at ensuring access to important sea lanes in the Pacific and challenging “excessive” maritime claims.

According to the above speech, the U.S. considers that it enjoys not only right of innocent passage, which is accorded by the UNCLOS, but also freedom of navigation within 12 nautical miles of Mischief Reef. That proves that the U.S. does not even consider that Mischief Reef can have territorial sea.

That is worth much attention from the Chinese side. The foreign media use frequently the word “artificial island” when referring to Mischief Reef. This shows the dangerous attempts of some countries to change the nature of some of the Nansha

Islands. According to UNCLOS, “artificial islands” have no territorial sea but only a safety zone with a diameter no more than 1 km. Some foreign media deliberately used the term to confuse the public about the real nature of the islands occupied by China. In fact, the land reclamation in Nansha

Islands is for the sole purpose of enhancing the living conditions on the islands and it will by no means change the nature of them. Those islands will NEVER change into “artificial islands”.

The U.S. often portrays itself as the guard of order and challenges the “excessive” claims of other States. However, such challenges are no more than unilateral actions taken by the U.S. Although it cites often the UNCLOS to blame other countries, it has always refused to ratify the Convention itself. The so-called “freedom of navigation” operations are nothing but excuses.

For more information, please see:

[http://www.guancha.cn/military-affairs/2017\\_05\\_29\\_410657.shtml](http://www.guancha.cn/military-affairs/2017_05_29_410657.shtml)

[http://world.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-05/25/content\\_29497655.htm](http://world.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-05/25/content_29497655.htm)

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<http://m.todayonline.com/china/india/china/china-says-us-warship-entered-its-waters-without-permission>

## EVENTS

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sino-Japanese Non-governmental East China Sea Airspace Security Dialogue Joint Meeting** was held on May 12-13, 2017 in Nangjing, China.

<https://nanhai.nju.edu.cn/3e/ef/c5327a147183/page.htm>

**South China Sea Underwater Archaeology Working Conference** was held on May 16, 2017 in Haikou, China.

<http://www.oceanol.com/wenhua/201705/16/c64595.html>

**Advanced Seminar on Infrastructure Construction of Marine Silk Road** was held on May 16-17, 2017 in Xiamen, China.

<http://www.hellosea.net/news/focus/2017-05-18/41066.html>

**The 2017 China Ocean Scholarship Award** was held on May 19, 2017 in Xiamen, China.

[http://www.soa.gov.cn/bmzz/jgbmzz2/gjhzsgatbgs/201705/t20170523\\_56196.html](http://www.soa.gov.cn/bmzz/jgbmzz2/gjhzsgatbgs/201705/t20170523_56196.html)

**International Conference on Belt and Road Initiative: Expanding Cooperation and Addressing Gaps** was held on May 25-26, 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

<http://www.mima.gov.my/index.php/events/12-mima-ciiss-obor-conference>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**International Law of the Sea Summer Camp of South China Sea Institute, Xiamen University** will be held on July 11-15, 2017 in Xiamen, China.

<http://scsi.xmu.edu.cn/41/23/c7405a278819/page.htm>

**Maritime Safety Committee of IMO 98th session** will be held on June 7-16, 2017 in London, UK.

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/Pages/Default.aspx>

**19th International Conference on Marine Resources and Conservation** will be held on August 7-8, 2017 in New York, USA.

<https://www.waset.org/conference/2017/08/new-york/ICMRCO>

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Wuhan University Doctoral Forum on Boundary and Ocean Study** will be held on September 25, 2017 in Beijing, China.

<http://www.cibos.whu.edu.cn/index.php?id=590>

**The Belt and Road: China's flagship initiative and its implications for the global economy** will be held on October 16, 2017 in London, UK.

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**Chinese, Philippine Presidents Discuss Ties, Korean Peninsula Situation Over Phone**

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